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to secure a certificate, as it were, qualifying him for employment in one of the semi-scientific branches of the government service. In that respect his failure was a severe disappointment, particularly to his mother, who had set all her hopes upon him, and was distressed to find that the promise of his college days at Aix remained unfulfilled. At the same time, mother-like, she blamed the examiners more than she blamed him, and once more she provided him with enough money to spend the summer vacation in Provence,¹

A week after he had been "ploughed" at the Sorbonne, Zola was again roaming the hills, in a blouse and hob-nailed boots, accompanied by his usual intimates.

There was also no little writing of poetry on Zola's part during those holidays, the influence of Musset still being in the ascendant, as is shown by a piece entitled "Eodolpho," in which one can further detect the change which Parisian life, particularly that of the Quartier Latin, where he had his home, was now effecting *in* the youth who had awoken, in Provence, to little more than ideal love. Musset likewise inspires some verses entitled "Vision," also dating from this time; but a perusal of the "Contes de La Fontaine," a book which no discipline seems able to keep out of French colleges, plainly suggested "Le Diable ermite,"

in which the good Abba's erotic style was imitated only too successfully. Another piece, entitled " Keligion," shows that the young versifier, the former winner of prizes for " religious instruc- tion," was already losing his faith under the influence, no doubt, of Parisian surroundings. In this effort he is found

¹ It seems probable that he had already spent his Easter holidays there that year; for some of his verses, " Ge quo je veux/" are dated Aix, May, 1850. See Alexis, *L c.*, p. 297.